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lessened activity in advanced life and it is thought that the functional degeneration of the thyroid is more rapid than that of the adrenals. It is also recognized that a functional or permanent degeneration of the pituitary will result in hypotension.

High blood-pressure in cases of obesity which show no evidence of cardiac or renal disturbances and which do not respond to dietetic measures seems to be directly attributable to disturbances of internal secretion.

In conclusion, blood-pressure determinations should be a part of every examination. In persons of past middle life these determinations should be made periodically. In this way many cases of hemiplegia or uremia will be averted. Many cases of eclampsia will be recognized early and many cases of beginning cardiac failure will be discovered while there is still a chance of recovery. Its determination will aid in distinguishing between coma due to hemorrhage and that caused by thrombosis, as in the latter the blood-pressure is invariably low. It will often decide whether venesection should be employed. After the discovery of a high blood-pressure we must then seek for the etiology for it is only by understanding the cause that we can institute the proper measures. It should not be forgotten that high blood-pressure is nature's method of retaining compensation and undue lowering of the pressure may invite uremia.

## FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE AND HER NURSES

BY ELIZABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

*Gagetown, New Brunswick*

There has been published this year a selection from Miss Nightingale's yearly addresses to the probationers and nurses of the Nightingale School at St. Thomas' Hospital, London. Those included are from 1876 to 1888. All that we can learn of the mind of this greatest of nurses is of value to the nursing profession. Some extracts from these addresses are presented in this paper at greater length than would be possible in an ordinary review of the book. Through them all runs that passion for righteousness, right feeling, right thinking, right living, which was the mainspring of Florence Nightingale's life.

She says: "Whether in having a drain cleaned out, or in ventilating a hospital ward, or in urging the principles of healthy construction of buildings, or of temperance and useful occupation, or of sewage and water supply, I always considered myself as obeying a direct command

of God and it was with the earnestness and reverence due to God's laws that I urged them."

She holds up constantly to her nurses the pattern of the Perfect Life and urges them to fashion themselves upon it. "Unless we improve every day in our nursing we are going back: how much more must it be that, unless we improve every day in our conduct as Christian women, followers of Him by Whose name we call ourselves, we shall be going back." "We know no other calling in the world, except it be that of teaching, in which what we can do depends so much upon what we are. To be a good nurse one must be a good woman, or one is truly nothing but a tinkling bell. To be a good woman at all one must be an improving woman, for stagnant waters sooner or later, and stagnant air, as we know ourselves, always grow corrupt and unfit for use."

In many a terse sentence she presses home a truth. "What signifies it to me that this one does me an injury or the other speaks ill of me if I do not deserve it." "I suppose, of course, that those who think themselves better than others are bent upon setting them a better example."

"We cannot suppose God to be pleased with stupidity and carelessness. The free woman in Christ obeys, or rather seconds all the rules, all the orders given her, with intelligence, with all her heart, and with all her strength and with all her mind."

"This is not to say that we are to be doing other people's work. Quite the reverse. The very essence of all good organization is that everybody should do her (or his) own work in such a way as to help and not to hinder everyone else's work."

"Life, perhaps, is as difficult as death."

"If ever a place may be called the 'House of God' it is a hospital, if it be what it should be. In old times it was called the 'house' or the 'hotel' of God. The greatest and oldest central hospital of Paris, where is the mother house of the principal order of nursing sisters, is to this day called Hotel Dieu, the House of God."

"I will tell you an old woman's experience—that I can never remember a time and that I do not know a work, which so requires to be rooted and grounded in God as ours."

"What a pity that so many actions should be wasted by us nurses in our wards and in our 'homes' when we might always be doing common things uncommonly well."

"What a shame it is to come here as probationers—and then not to make our improvement the chief business of our lives. If, when I was young, there had been such opportunities of training for hospital work, as you have, how eagerly I should have made the most of them."

"Life is short, as preachers often tell us: that is, each stage of it is apt to come to an end before the work which belongs to it is finished."

"Be earnest in work, be earnest also even in such things as taking exercise and proper holidays. There should be something of seriousness in keeping our bodies too up to the mark."

"Do we reflect on the immense responsibility of a nurse towards her helpless sick, who depend upon her almost entirely for quiet and thought and order."

"The service of God, which, with us means good nursing of the sick, good fellowship and high example as relates to our fellow workers."

"Training consists in teaching people to bear responsibilities and laying the responsibilities on them as they are able to bear them."

"Lastly it is a charity to nurse sick bodies well; it is greatest charity to nurse well and patiently sick minds, tiresome sufferers. There is a greater charity even than these: to do good to those who are not good to us, to serve with love those who do not even receive our service with good temper."

"The patients might as well be pieces of furniture, and we the housemaids, unless we see how interesting a thing nursing is."

*The Head Nurse.* In some of the addresses are especial words of advice to head nurses, or sisters, as they are called in English hospitals. "Is not the Head Nurse, or Sister, there not that she may do as she likes, but that she should serve all for the common good of all?"

"Be a judge of the work of others of whom you are in charge not a detective."

"The head nurse must have been tested in the refiner's fire, as the prophets would say; have been tried by many tests and have come out of them stainless, in full command of herself and her principles, never losing her temper." "She must be just, not unjust."

"She must have an iron sense of truth and right for herself and others and a golden sense of love and charity for them."

"Ward management is only made possible by kindness and sympathy. The mere way in which a thing is said or done to patient or probationer makes all the difference." "Never to have a quarrel with another; never to say things which rankle in another's mind, never when we are uncomfortable ourselves to make others uncomfortable—for quarrels come out of such very small matters, a hasty word, a sharp joke, a harsh order; without regard to these things how can we take charge?"

"The world, whether of a ward or an empire, is governed not by many words but by few."

"We ought to be what we want to seem, or those under us will find out very soon that we only seem what we ought to be."

"She must have a keen though generous insight into the characters of those she has to control. They must know that she cares for them even while she is checking them; or rather that she checks them because she cares for them. A woman thus reproved is often made your friend for life." "The very first element for having control over others is, of course, to have control over oneself. If I cannot take charge of myself, I cannot take charge of others." "A person in charge must be felt more than she is heard—not heard more than she is felt." "A person, more especially a woman, in charge must have a quieter and more impartial mind than those under her in order to influence them by the best part of them and not by the worst."

*Difference in Status of Nurses.* Here and there through the book we catch glimpses of the enormous advance that the profession of nursing has made in the forty-odd years that have passed since it was written. Who, in the present day, would write a paragraph like the following? "I have sometimes heard 'But have we not reason to be conceited, when we compare ourselves to—and—?' (naming drinking, immoral, careless, dishonest nurses). I will not think it possible that such things can be said among us. Taking it even upon the worldly ground, what woman among us, instead of looking to that which is higher, will of her own accord compare herself with that which is lower—with immoral women?" And again, "In the last ten years, thank God, numerous training schools for nurses have grown up, resolved to unite in putting a stop to such things as drunken, immoral and inefficient nursing." "Has it not even been said, (tell it not in Gath) 'and these conceited Nightingale women scarcely know how to read and write?' " "I read lately," she says, "in a well known medical journal, speaking of the 'Nightingale Nurses,' that the day is quite gone by when a novel would give a caricature of a nurse as a Mrs. Gamp—drinking, brutal, ignorant coarse, old woman. The Nightingale Nurse in a novel would be—what do you think?—an active, useful, clever nurse. These are the parts I approved. But what else do you think?—a lively, rather pert, and very conceited young woman. Ah, there's the rub. You should see what our name is up for in the world. That's what I should like to be left out. This is what a friendly critic says of us, and we may be very sure that unfriendly critics say much worse. Do we deserve what they say of us?"

Here is a glimpse of the beginning of teaching. "Our new medical instructor, having vigorously taken us in hand and given us his invaluable teaching (1) in Medical and Surgical Nursing, (2) in the elements

of Anatomy, I need not say: Let us profit. Next, in order to give more time and leisure to less tired bodies, the special Probationers have two afternoons in the week off duty for the course of reading which our able medical instructor has laid down. And the Nurse Probationers have all one morning and one afternoon in the week to improve themselves, in which our kind home sister assists them by classes. It will be a poor tale, indeed, in their after life for nurses who cannot read, write, spell and cipher well and correctly, and read aloud easily and take notes of the temperature of cases and the like."

*Intimate glimpses.* There are a few personal touches in the book, unconscious revelations, which seem to bring the real Florence Nightingale very near to us—almost more so than her letters. After speaking of her desire that her nurses should learn something every day she says: "I have had more experience in all countries and in different ways of hospitals than almost anyone ever had before (there were no opportunities for learning in my youth such as you have had), but if I could recover strength so much as to walk about, I would begin all over again. I would come for a year's training to St. Thomas' Hospital, under your admirable matron (and I venture to say that she would find me the closest in obedience to all our rules), sure that I should learn every day, learn all the more for my past experience. And then I would try to be learning every day to the last hour of my life. 'And when his legs were cutt off he fought upon his stumps,'—says the ballad; so when I could no longer learn by nursing others, I would learn by being nursed, by seeing nurses practice upon me. It is all experience." Again "I have been in positions of authority myself and have always tried to remember that to use such advantage inconsiderately is cowardly. To be sharp upon them is worse in me than in them to be sharp upon me. No one can trample upon others and govern them." Once more, "And may I say a thing from my own experience? No training is of any use, unless one can learn to feel and to think out things for oneself and if we have not the true religious feeling and purpose, hospital life, the highest of all things *with* these, without them becomes a mere routine and bustle." In speaking of discipline she says, "For myself I can say that I have never known what it was, since I can remember anything, not to have 'prickly' discipline, more than anyone knew of, and I hope I have not 'kicked.' "

In a facsimile of her handwriting appended to the book, she says, "And don't despise what some of you call housemaid's work, If you thought of the extreme importance, you would not mind doing it. As you know, without thorough housemaid's work, everything in the ward or sickroom becomes permeated with organic matter. The greatest

compliment I ever thought I, as a hospital nurse, received was, that I was put to clean and 'do' the special ward, with the severest medical or surgical case, which I was nursing every day, because I did it thoroughly and without disturbing the patient."

These addresses were written in the silence of her room. She says in one of them, "A sick ward ought to be as quiet as a sickroom, and a sickroom, I need not say, ought to be the quietest place in God's kingdom.

She made hers a place of active work and for many years after these were written she continued to use her pen to further the numberless causes she had at heart, "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit" she was until the end, yet her nurses were always nearest her heart. She closes the last address in this book with "Once more, my heartiest sympathy, my dearest love to each and to all of you, from your ever faithful old comrade,

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE."

## THE HOSPITAL VERSUS THE GRADUATE SPECIAL NURSE<sup>1</sup>

By MARY A. MORAN, R.N.

*Augusta, Ga.*

So much has been written on this subject by the "Special Nurse," that it would seem but fair to remind her that there are two sides to the question. I doubt if there exists a superintendent who would not be more than happy if she could provide ideal quarters and rest rooms for the graduate special nurses and I feel sure she would also like to provide a private dining room and a wardrobe for each nurse not only for the sake of the nurse but for her own peace of mind.

Let us first consider a few of the discomforts of the nurse. One nurse told me that in a hospital where she specialized a room was provided them for rest but that the ants were so numerous that they were even on the beds. In another hospital a room was provided in the basement in which the specials could dress and on rainy days, what with umbrellas and wet clothes, it was well nigh impossible to get into uniform. They had six hours for sleep, which included the time they spent going to and from their rooms.

We all know of the awful indignities imposed upon both graduate and pupil special nurses in being asked to sleep on a cot in the same room with a male patient, often having to dress and undress in the same

<sup>1</sup> Read at the Eighth Annual Convention of the Georgia State Association of Graduate Nurses.